SPAWN
THE DARK AGES
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NIKKI SUREL

STORY
STEVE NILES

PENCILS
NAT JONES

INKS
CHANCE WOLF
KEVIN CONRAD

COVER
SIMON DAVIS

LETTERING
RICHARD STARKINGS AND
COMICRAFT'S OSCAR GONGORA

COLOR
MARK NICHOLAS

SPAWN THE DARK AGES SUMMARY

It is 901 AD. The Dark Ages. The darkest of times. Centuries after the Romans retreated and faded, yet many centuries before reason and order would take hold. The Dark Ages were times marked by sweat and blood and lives cut short by famine and disease. Desperate days. These were times the lands known today as Great Britain were fought over like raw meat in a dog's teeth. The world was up for grabs. New religions were sweeping the continent like a plague of hope in a hopeless time. These are the days that a Hellspawn named Covenant walked the earth in search of the truth, understanding and solution to the curse that bound him. These are his Dark Ages. These are his adventures...

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TODD McFARLANE

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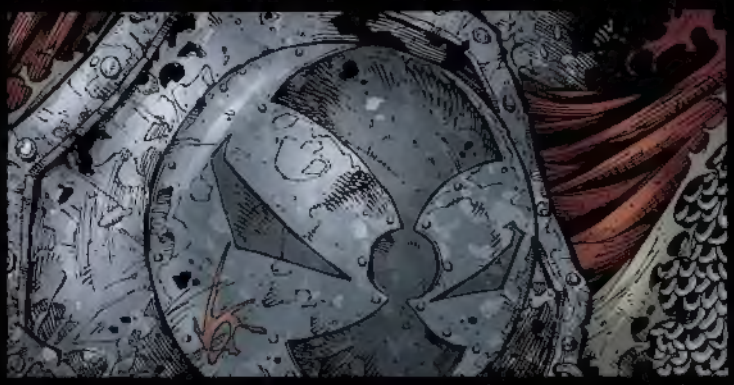
"Cold blows the wind to my true love, And gently drops the rain. I've never had but one true love, And in green-wood she lies slain."
"I'll do as much for my true love, As any young boy may, I'll sit and mourn all on her grave, For twelve months and a day."
"And when twelve months and a day was passed, The ghost did rise and speak, why sittest thou all on my grave And will not let me sleep?"
Go fetch me water from the desert, And blood from...
...out of the stone...

God...
There is a tale told of a dead man who returned from Hell to reclaim his land, his people, and his humanity.

In life, his name was Lord Iain Covenant.

Later, after death took him by the hand, Covenant would come to be known as The Black Knight.

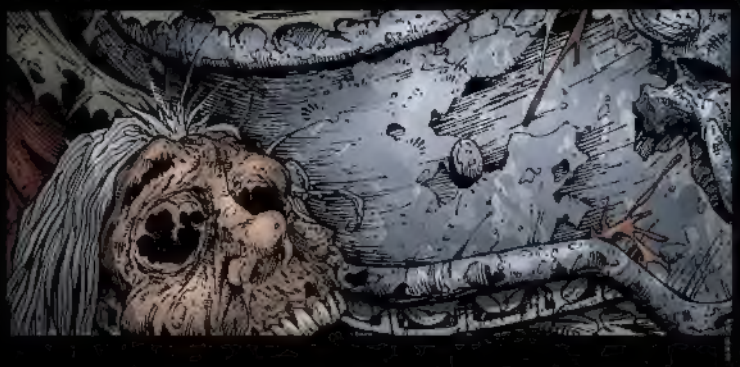
But still others called him something they dared only speak in hushed whispers, something so dark and horrible, that to simply hear the word brought a chill to the very core of the bone.



The word they dared not speak was Hellspawn.

In life, Covenant was a warrior. A man who stood tall and bowed only under the eyes of his God. But in a moment of weakness, Covenant fell into the heart and loins of a woman and tainted his pristine soul.

To redeem himself in the eyes of God, Covenant set out to join the Pope's Crusade and rid the Holy Lands of the godless hordes. Covenant killed with a mighty hand and slit throat after throat until Jerusalem's streets ran red with heretic blood.



But then the blade fell upon Lord Covenant himself, and as he felt his life draining from his body and mind, he knew he would be delivered into the arms of the God he had killed for.

He was sorely mistaken.

He was delivered into the pits of agony, right onto the doorstep of the Beast. Hell had claimed the soul of this righteous killer, Malebolgia claimed the murdering soul of Covenant for his own.

Returned to earth an immortal beast five years after his death, a servant of the dark lord himself, Covenant struggled to find his way. There were those who claimed to help him, like the man named Cogliostro, and there were those who stood to strike him down like DuBlanc and the Lord he served, but all failed to do as they claimed.

In the end Covenant, now beast, stood on his own two feet and reclaimed his people and his lands from the grip of tyranny and servitude.

Lord Covenant ruled his land again having captured the hearts and souls of his people. He sat upon a throne as he had in life, and for one small moment in time, he was happy.

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But happiness was not in the design. There were Others involved. Deals had been made, blood had been shed, history had been altered. It was too late for serenity. The machine had been set in motion.
It was a 400 year gamble laid down by players who had no intention of losing.
Watching Covenant rise from the ashes of despair, only to reclaim his place in society, and reclaim his throne, frustrated the powers, but they were never ones to be rash. They knew as they watched and waited, Covenant would slip, he would fall, he would tumble, and they would be there waiting to give a hand to the future leader of the Damned.
It would only be a matter of time...
Covenant enjoyed his role as ruler, and though his curse coursed through his veins, he allowed himself to enjoy the fruits of his conquests. He took the food, the wine and even the woman who dared be in his company.
Curse be damned. Covenant relished his new reign. Covenant lived again.

On the first anniversary of his greatest battle, the people of Rhyll presented their beloved leader with a gift.

It was a gift like no other for a leader like no other.

It had been worked on for over a year, forty blacksmiths pounding the iron around the clock for days at a time.

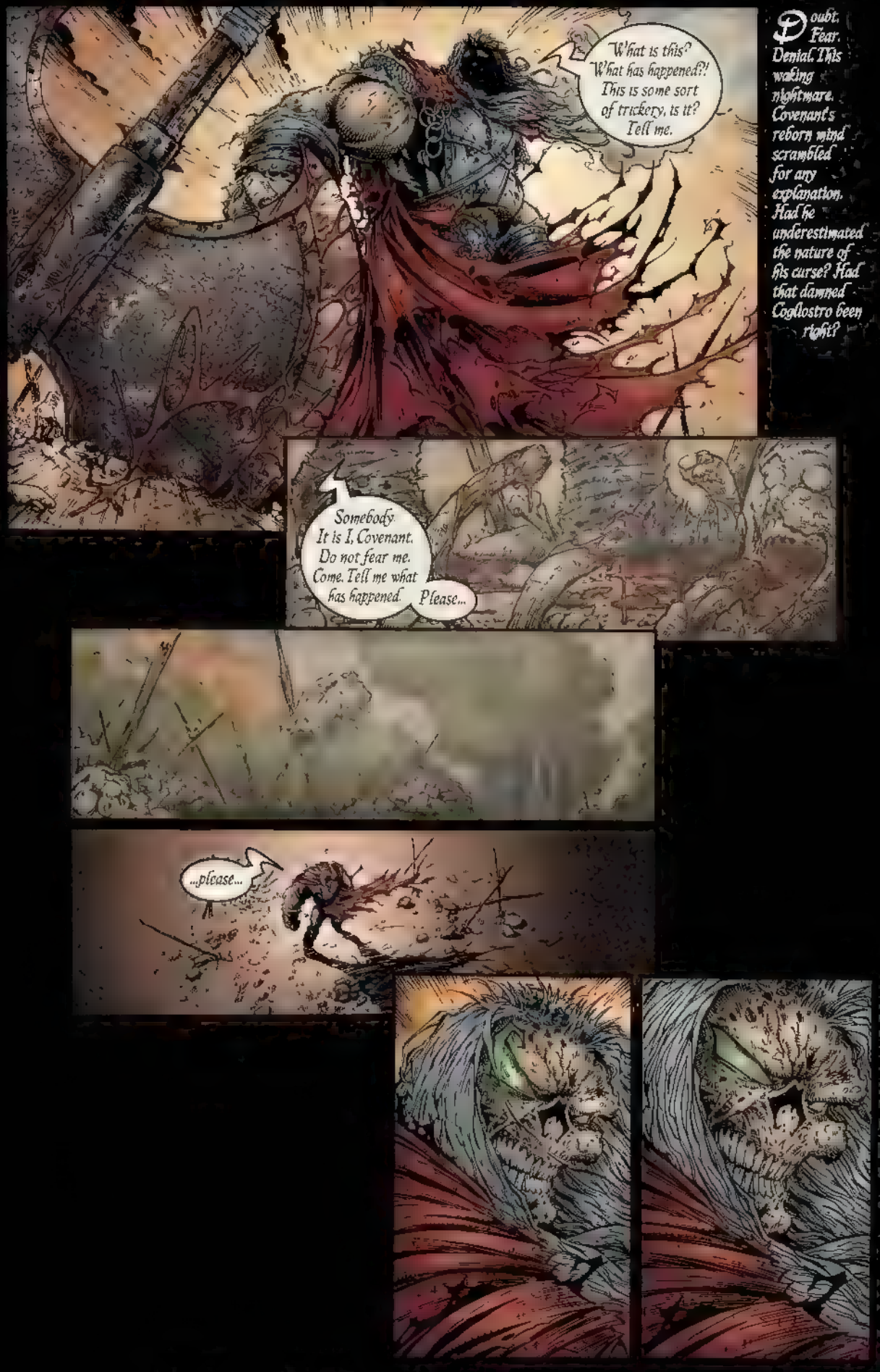
In all, it took 487 days to construct, and it took over eighty fit men to load it into the cart for the ceremony.

When it was complete, it weighed over a half a ton.
A battle ax for their undead ruler that only he possessed the strength to swing in battle.
It was indeed a generous and unique gift.
It is...

It is spectacular. I thank you. All of you!
I love it!
Covenant was pleased.
The powers were not.
Happiness spread on the surface, but somewhere in the darkness laughter could be heard rustling through the branches in the wood surrounding Rifyll.
Laughter like a scream.
Darkness drenched like ink.
As the melting of ice changes the course of rivers, the Hellspawn's serenity triggered events that could not be reversed.
The powers demand payment for their gamble.
When demands are not met, blood is shed.
Blackout.

Covenant falls. The darkness engulfs him. It must be a dream.
Uhrrr... who is there?
In the blackness there is heat. Wet heat pouring over Covenant as he dreams. There are women in his dreams begging for more, and men cheering him to take the final kill on the field.
But quickly, the begging turns to pleading. The cheers to cries of pain.
W....what is happening?
What is this?
The Hellspawn dreams a dream of his life before his second coming. When he was a man of flesh and blood and felt the heat of the sun on his face as he rode into battle.
Who's there? What has happened? I cannot hear you. I cannot see you.
But this isn't a dream, is it?
What's happened?
It is not a dream.
...no...
...no
It is not a nightmare.

This is reality
NOOOOOOOO!


What is this? What has happened?! This is some sort of trickery, is it? Tell me.
Doubt. Fear. Denial. This waking nightmare. Covenant's reborn mind scrambled for any explanation. Had he underestimated the nature of his curse? Had that damned Cagliostro been right?
Somebody. It is I, Covenant. Do not fear me. Come. Tell me what has happened.
Please...
...please...

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One of you is the sole survivor of the massacre. Certainly they will know the truth. They will know who did this terrible thing, and then Covenant can exact their revenge for them.
All he need know is who did this terrible thing!
Why do you look at me this way? It is I, Covenant.
Their eyes tell the tale. In their eyes the Hellspawn sees the truth of this vicious attack.
There is no other explanation. The blackout. The curse had struck when his guard was down and now all of Rhyll is awash with blood.
It was him! It was Covenant! Beast!
What is this?! Why are you attacking me?
Monster!
Defiler! You killed my babies!
No wait. This cannot be!

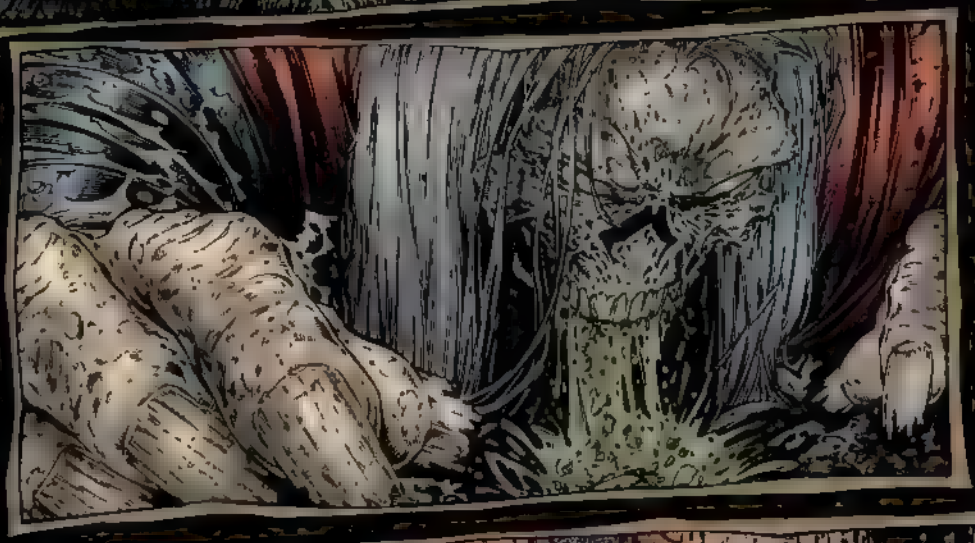
Get out! Kill yourself! Die!
Get out!
Demon! We trusted you and you cut our throats!
He thought that he had delivered himself from the pits and reshaped his existence into something that the Lord could not ignore, but now, he has been forsaken yet again for the second time in so few years.
He has lived as a man, died as a hero and still was forced to feel the ass of Malebolgia.
Now this.
If this was their intent, then they had performed well. Covenant was broken. His heart shattered. The few scraps of humanity that he had managed to garner were again in tatters at his feet.
If they had meant to break him, the deed was done.

You don't have to go, do you?
I do not belong here any longer.
I was a fool to think otherwise.
Alek... do you know.. did I do this? Did I kill all of those people?
I don't know.. don't you?

Questions spinning like webs in his mind. Endless, seemingly without rhyme or reason. But it is a carefully laid out labyrinth, this web, this curse.

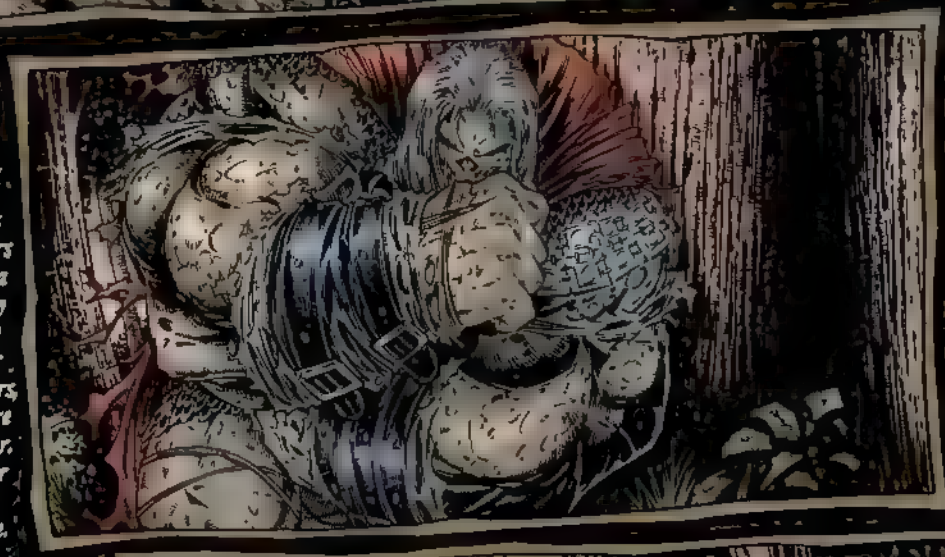
Why?

The wrong question to ponder. Instead Covenant should have asked when. How long did he expect to escape the eyes of Malebolgia? How long had he thought a Spawn of the Lions of Hell could live among the flesh and bones?



Why?

A deal was made. Covenant surrendered his soul to the powers in exchange for a second chance on the plane of the living. For their trouble, the powers received one more chance at a leader. One more soldier that the other side did not have.



Why?

Because in life Lord Iain Covenant slaughtered hundreds of lives in the name of his God.

Perhaps it was the killing that caught the eyes of Malebolgia, but it was more than just the death. It was the glimmer in Covenant's eye when he ran his sword through the entrails of his foe.

God was the excuse, but murder was the reason.

Hell took notice. Covenant made the deal. No more questions would be asked.

Cogliostro!
Cogliostro!
No need to yell, boy. I am right here. I've already heard about Rhyll. Word of slaughter travels fast
I suppose you came for some sort of comfort, perhaps an explanation? Well, there isn't one. I know nothing of what happened.
Was it me? Did I do this terrible thing?
I see no reason to split hairs. Whether by hand or by presence, it was you who brought on this massacre.
Why will you not answer my questions?!
I have answered. Just not the way you would choose. Do not confuse truth with want or need, Hellspawn
I warned you to stay away from the citizens of Rhyll. I warned you not to reclaim what you were in life. You are not what you were. You are not a man! Stop trying to live as one. For as long as you do, you will leave a river of carnage and blood in your wake!

You are playing right into their hands. You have delivered a steady and constant stream of death since you returned. My God, boy, why can you not see that your choices have been foolish.
They have been shit! When will you learn that if you are to escape this curse you will have to stop playing into their hands? How many more will die before you discover the truth that has been here all along? How many more children will lie dead in the mud before you?
Silence!
You can not murder the truth, Hellspawn!
No more riddles! No more lies! No more choosing! I have had enough! Everybody leave me! Leave me to this Hell!
Do you feel better now?
Much.
Now if you are finished acting like a babe fresh from his mother's belly, we can move on with your lessons.

I am tired of your mouth.
Gack! It is the truth that tires you, boy. Gack! It is the truth that you fear.
You are an arrogant worm. Why should I listen to you? All I hear are words while people are dying, while my life is stolen from me yet a second time.
Gack! Now you are using your head.
More riddles? I would prefer to watch you die. I would prefer to never hear that voice again.
What would -Gack!- you have me do? Feed you pig-shit? Feed you more lies?
I want the truth.
I...want... my...life... back.
Gack! Killing Gack! me. Fool. This is -Gack!- what they want.

Bah! Enough with you.
Others?
You are not the first to have suffered this fate. Choke! I have told you this. You are one of many attempts, and there will be many more. Cough! All we can hope to do is fight the war one soldier at a time.
Cough! If you would- cough! - stop playing into their hands perhaps you would find a way around this tragedy...
...others have.
Again with the riddles. I am tired of your riddles. Speak plainly, man. Tell me how you know the things you claim to know.
I was a Hellspawn. I escaped the shroud...so can you.
I have had enough of your lies. I will find my way without the guidance of your insanity.

But where will you go, Boy? Where will you go? Aye! You'll be back soon enough!
There is a tale told of a dead man who returned from Hell to reclaim his land, his people, and his humanity.
One by one all three of these things were taken away from him, murdered and obliterated.
This is the path of the Hellspawn.
This is the path of the damned.
This is the cycle that may never end.

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